

This legislation does not help the millions of Americans in need nor does it set the right priorities for this country. In such dire economic times with the largest budget deficit in this nation's history, this Congress does not have the luxury of bestowing this tax cut of a quarter-trillion dollars on millionaires.

I urge my colleagues to vote against this bill that helps only millionaires, and to turn their focus towards the problems of those Americans who are in economic crisis or could shortly be confronted with painful financial decisions if this economy does not start improving its employment outlook.

WALL STREET REFORM AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. PATRICK J. KENNEDY

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2009

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4173) to provide for financial regulatory reform, to protect consumers and investors, to enhance Federal understanding of insurance issues, to regulate the over-the-counter derivatives markets, and for other purposes:

Mr. KENNEDY. Madam Chair, last fall, after 8 years of the previous administration looking the other way while Wall Street and the big banks exploited loopholes, we faced a near collapse of our financial system. Deregulation and lax oversight allowed Wall Street and big banks to gamble with the hard-earned money of the American people, compromising our savings and risking our future. Over the last year, Congress has had to make difficult, and frankly unpopular, decisions that were necessary to rescue our economy from the brink of disaster.

The Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act will put in place the rules to make sure that this doesn't happen again, to protect the middle-class Americans who play by the rules from the consequences of Wall Street greed. This legislation ends many of the unfair lending practices that created predatory mortgages and waves of foreclosure. By stopping "too big to fail" firms before they threaten to wreak havoc on our economy, H.R. 4173 will finally put an end to the era of taxpayer-funded bailouts.

While many aspects of this legislation are important, perhaps its most significant achievement is the establishment of an agency whose primary mission is to ensure the safety of financial products and look out for consumers. For too long, all of our fractured regulatory agencies have only looked out for the financial institutions they work for. The Consumer Financial Protection Agency will look out for unsafe financial products the same way the FDA monitors unsafe medicines or the Consumer Product Safety Commission examines our children's toys.

While we have taken extraordinary actions to correct our economic crisis, the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection act takes the necessary actions to hold accountable the people responsible for last year's crisis and to prevent another crisis in the future.

TRIBUTE TO DR. DENNIS SANDLIN

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 11, 2009

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the late Doctor Dennis Sandlin, a Kentucky physician who lost his life, standing fast in the face of danger to practice ethical and responsible medicine in a medically underserved region, inundated with poverty and drug addiction.

On December 8, 2009, Doctor Sandlin was tragically murdered in front of nurses and staff at the Leatherwood-Blackey Medical Clinic in Perry County, Kentucky. Doctor Sandlin routinely refused to give doctor-shopping drug seekers a prescription for pain pills without passing proper evaluation. He refused to allow his practice to be part of the drug epidemic, although many physicians in the past have given in to fear of demands and threats by drug seekers across the region. After being denied narcotics for a second time that morning, a patient returned to Doctor Sandlin's office and fatally shot him in the head.

Doctor Sandlin returned home to Perry County, after graduating from the University of Louisville's School of Medicine, to provide healthcare to less fortunate individuals. He served generations of families for 28 years until his untimely death. Doctor Sandlin's medical practice may be over, but his style of practice will live on as the pinnacle of good medicine.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in memory of Doctor Dennis Sandlin. In my opinion, he died a hero. Every physician, pharmacist, law enforcement official, medical and pharmacy student can learn from Doctor Sandlin's tenacity to practice responsible medicine and never give place to fear.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KAY GRANGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 11, 2009

Ms. GRANGER. Madam Speaker, on rollcall Nos. 939, 940, 942, 943, and 945 I was absent from the House.

Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

WALL STREET REFORM AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. STEVE BUYER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 9, 2009

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4173) to provide for financial regulatory reform, to protect consumers and investors, to enhance Federal understanding of insurance issues, to regulate the over-the-counter derivatives markets, and for other purposes:

Mr. BUYER. Madam Chair, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 4173 because it does not

exempt the VA's very successful Loan Guaranty program from regulation under the provisions of this bill. The saying, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it," applies. The VA guaranteed loans are not experiencing the high rates of delinquency and foreclosure like those backed by FHA. VA, to its credit, recognized the risks inherent in easing underwriting standards and stayed out of the subprime market.

According to the September 30, 2009 National Delinquency Survey conducted by Mortgage Bankers Association, VA-backed home mortgages are experiencing significantly lower delinquency and foreclosure rates than any other government-backed programs. For example, as of September 30, the delinquency rate for all subprime mortgages was over 28 percent. FHA-backed loans show about a 14.4 percent delinquency rate while only about 8.1 percent of VA loans were delinquent. More ominously, 24.7 percent of subprime loans were in foreclosure (VA quite wisely does not guarantee subprime loans), and 3.3 percent of FHA loans had reached the foreclosure stage but only about 2.3 percent of VA loans were being foreclosed. These differences due to VA's stewardship and the Veterans Affairs Committee's oversight amount to tens of millions of dollars in savings to the taxpayers.

Madam Chair, the provisions of H.R. 4173 would clearly apply to the VA's Loan Guaranty program. For example, in defining the scope and functions covered by the bill, section 4002 excludes only the "Secretary of the Treasury and any agency or bureau under the jurisdiction of the Secretary." That means VA loan guaranty programs are subject to the provisions of the bill. Further in the definitions of "Financial Activity", it includes extending credit. VA has a small direct loan program used to sell their foreclosed properties. The bill's definitions also cover collecting consumer data. VA does that. VA also sells mortgage-based securities on the secondary market. Such activities are covered in the definitions section. The definitions also cover VA's contracts for portfolio servicing, including sales and maintenance of its foreclosed properties. Finally, VA-guaranteed loans offered by lenders would be subject to the jurisdiction of the CPRA rules and regulations.

There are a couple of reasons why VA's loan guaranty program is outperforming the non-VA sector. First, the House Veterans Affairs Committee has oversight of the program and works hard to ensure the program is conducted in a manner that does not stray into products like subprime loans. Second, VA did not reduce its underwriting standards, and the combination of its higher standards along with servicing programs to assist veterans experiencing difficulty, has allowed VA to be a good steward of taxpayer dollars.

My understanding of this mammoth 1,300 page bill is that the new bureaucracies and czars and whatever else is hidden in the bill will have the ability to affect how the VA loan guaranty programs are offered. Additionally, the broad language in the bill which allows the CFPA the discretion to define its own powers is at best short-sighted and at worst Orwellian. I am reminded that absolute power corrupts absolutely. Moreover, by placing additional tax burdens on financial institutions, many of which invest in mortgage securities offered on the secondary market, mortgage rates will go up. That is exactly what the VA's Loan Guaranty program, or the housing market at large,